



Town of Warren, Rhode Island

Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on August 20, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. The presiding officer was Brandt Heckert. Board members present were Sara Volino, Mark Lombari, Kate Dickson, Patrick DeSocio, Christine Lichatz, and Spencer Morris. Board members Karen Dionne and Darcy DaCosta were absent. Ex officio member Caroline Wells was absent. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB.

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting of July 16, 2012

The minutes from the regular meeting held on July 16, 2012 were reviewed by the members via email. Ms. Volino made a motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded by Ms. Dickson and all members were in favor.

2. Report from the Gateway Signage workgroup (Dionne/Lombari/Volino)

The gateway signage workgroup presented the Board with samples of the proposed signs. The Board agreed on the sign with the dark red background which will coordinate with the existing municipal signage. The Board discussed the sign locations and the problems with placing the signs on private property. The workgroup will present a proposal to Town Council at the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, September 15th, 2012. The Board will ask Town Council for advice on going forward with having the gateway signs placed on private property at the town borders with Bristol on Route 136 and Route 114, north on RT 136, and west on route 103. Mr. Heckert stated he would send an email to Anthony DeSisto to make him aware of the issue with the gateway signage locations.

3. Discover Warren Update to include the Shipshape Challenge

Ms. Dickson reported that several contestants have signed up for the Shipshape Challenge and that one contestant has already won paint donated from Adler's Hardware. The Shipshape Challenge is being promoted on Facebook, as well as in the media and with posters and mailings. Ms. Dickson and Mr. DeSocio expect more participation through September and October; however, the goal for the first year is to create a buzz and gain momentum for the event going forward. Judging for the Shipshape Challenge will take place in October at the Warren Walk-a-bout. The event will require a judging location and 5-8 judges. The Board discussed several potential judges including Harry Adler, Arnold Robinson and Lombard Pozzi. The kiosk on Railroad Avenue was suggested as a

judging location. Ms. Dickson stated that a meeting is scheduled for September 17th; anyone who is willing to help with the Shipshape Challenge is welcome to attend.

4. Discussion and action regarding the upcoming Special Financial Town Meeting for the sale of Main Street School (Hope & Main)

Mr. Heckert reminded the Board that it is crucial that the Hope and Main Project move forward. A Special Financial Town Meeting is scheduled for October; a quorum of 125 people is required for the sale of the Main Street to go forward. Hope and Main has a public open house scheduled for October as well. Caroline Wells has also a fact sheet on the specifics of the Hope and Main project. The Board agreed that getting Warren voters to understand the importance of Hope and Main in the community is extremely important, as well as encouraging as many people as possible to attend the special financial town meeting.

5. Review and action on the updated 2012-2013 EDB work plan

Mr. Heckert presented the Board with a revised draft of the 2012-2013 EDB work plan. The Board went over each objective and reported on the progress of several items. Ms. Dickson reported that the RIPTA bus shelter project is currently in the hands of the town planner. The Board discussed the Warren Arts Initiative and the possibility of inviting a member of the Art Night board to come to a future EDB meeting. The Board discussed inviting guest speakers (objective 5) to future EDB meetings; Ms. Dickson recommended inviting members of economic development boards from other communities with similar resources and challenges as Warren. Mr. Morris made a motion to accept the revised 2012-2013 work plan, the motion was seconded by Ms. Dickson, and all members were in favor.

6. Joint meeting with the Warren Conservation Commission to discuss joint beautification efforts (scheduled to proceed at 7:00 pm)

The EDB had a brief informational meeting with the Warren Conservation Commission at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Heckert stated that it is within the purview of the EDB to look at conservation projects as part of good economic development; the intention of the joint meeting is to look at how the two groups can work together in the future. Ms. Harrison reported that she was frustrated by the lack of support of the business community for Earth Day; Ms. Volino stated that persistence is essential in gaining support for programs. Ms. Lichatz offered suggestions regarding low maintenance landscaping for public locations. The two groups discussed the adopt-a-spot program and the Shipshape Challenge, as well as the potential to work together to improve areas such as the Railroad Avenue kiosk.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Morris, the motion was seconded by Ms. Volino, and all members were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

The next meeting of the EDB is scheduled for Monday, September 17, 2012.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald

September 13, 2012

